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ABSTRACT

Results of a followup study of 40 elementary guidance programs established with ESEA Title III funds in 1976 showed that the funding of the programs for one year had a significant impact: 32 of the 40 districts assumed the funding of the programs after the initial year of operation. The remaining eight districts reported that the programs had been very successful and effective but were discontinued after the initial year of funding due to lack of funding. The survey also showed that: (1) Most of the programs which were still in operation had expanded their staff and/or services. (2) Three districts which had discontinued the program due to lack of funds had included elementary guidance in their district's long-range plan. (3) Twenty-three of the 29 districts responding to the mail questionnaire had assumed the entire funding of the elementary guidance program; four of the districts were financing the program with district and Title IV funds; one was using all Title IV funds; and one was using district and Title I funds. (4) The counselors were very enthusiastic about the program and reported strong support by the administration, teachers, community and students. (5) The counselors felt that the communication problems experienced during the initial year of operation had been resolved and that the major weakness of the program in 1979 was understaffing. Thus, their primary recommendation for the improvement of the programs was to expand the staff. (Author)

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Follow-Up of ESEA Title III-Funded Elementary Guidance Programs

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SUMMARY

This publication reports the results of a follow-up study of 40 elementary guidance programs established with ESEA Title III funds in 1976. The survey, conducted by the Department of Education in January of 1979, showed that the funding of the programs for one year had a significant impact: 32 of the 40 districts assumed the funding of the programs after the initial year of operation. The remaining eight districts reported that the programs had been very successful and effective but were discontinued after the initial year of funding due to lack of district funds or other funding priorities. The survey also showed that:

1. Most of the programs which were still in operation had expanded their staff and/or services.
2. Three districts which had discontinued the program due to lack of funds had included elementary guidance in their district's long-range plan.
3. Twenty-three of the 29 districts responding to the mail questionnaire had assumed the entire funding of the elementary guidance program; four of the districts were financing the program with district and Title IV funds; one was using all Title IV funds; and one was using district and Title I funds.
4. The counselors were very enthusiastic about the program and reported strong support by the administration, teachers, community and students.
5. The counselors felt that the communication problems experienced during the initial year of operation had been resolved and that the major weakness of the program in 1979 was understaffing. Thus, their primary recommendation for the improvement of the programs was to expand the staff.

FOLLOW-UP OF ESEA TITLE III-FUNDED ELEMENTARY GUIDANCE PROGRAMS

In 1976 the Pennsylvania Department of Education used its final ESEA Title III appropriation to establish elementary guidance programs in 40 school districts that did not have existing programs. Each of the 40 districts received approximately $20,000 to employ an elementary guidance counselor and design a program. The funds were available for one year only and the districts were expected to assume the funding after the first year.

What became of the programs after the initial year of funding and how had those still in operation changed? This paper discusses the results of a survey which investigated these questions.

PROCEDURE

The districts which received Title III funds in 1976 were contacted by telephone in January of 1979 to determine whether the programs were still operational. If so, the counselor was sent a questionnaire about the program. If the program had been discontinued, information about its demise was obtained by phone from the elementary supervisor or other appropriate administrator.

FINDINGS

The elementary guidance programs were no longer functioning in eight of the 40 school districts when they were contacted in 1979. All of these districts reported that the program had been successful and effective, but that it was discontinued after the initial year of funding due to lack of district funds or other funding priorities. Commitment to the program, however, was found in the fact that three of these districts have included elementary guidance in their long-range plans. The remaining 32 programs were still in operation. Elementary guidance counselors from 29 of these 32 districts responded to the mail questionnaire. Their responses were included in the analysis which follows. Questionnaires from two districts were received too late to be included in the analysis, and one district did not respond.[1]

Activities

The counselors reported they were involved in elementary guidance activities an average of 88 percent of their working time. Eleven of the counselors (38 percent) spent all of their time in elementary guidance activities. In contrast, one counselor shared the elementary guidance responsibilities with a second counselor, had teaching responsibilities and was involved in elementary guidance only 10 percent of the time. Some of the other activities the counselors were involved in were special education, intermediate unit liaison, clerical work, coordinating with other people and programs, gifted coordinator, individualized educational program representative, bus duty, hall duty, lunchroom duty, Title I project director, middle school guidance, club coordinator, teaching and long-range planning.

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[1] See Appendix A for the listing of school districts in which the Title III programs were financed.

Counseling Activities

In 1976 the Division of Research identified seven roles the counselors assumed in the new elementary guidance programs (Martinko, 1976). Table 1 below shows how the counselors ranked their actual time spent on these activities and the proposed or ideal rankings when the programs were initiated. The responses of all the counselors were averaged and then ranked: the lowest numerical average received a rank of one. Thus, the most time was spent on consultation and the least in maintaining records. However, the counselors proposed that ideally the most time should be spent on individual counseling. The only other differences between the actual and proposed rankings were that the actual rankings showed pupil assessment fifth and parent conferences sixth, while in the ideal ranking these positions were reversed. Thus, the counselors as a whole felt there was close agreement between their actual and ideal activities.

Table 1

Counselors' Ranking of Actual Time Spent on Various Counseling Activities and Proposed Ideal Rank in 1976

	Actual		Ideal	
	Rank of Averages	Average of Counselors' Responses	Rank of Averages	Average of Counselors' Responses
Consultation	1	2.6	2	2.5
Individual Counseling	2	2.8	1	2.4
Group Guidance	3	3.2	3	2.6
Coordination	4	3.4	4	3.8
Pupil Assessment	5	4.1	6	5.5
Parent Conferences	6	4.8	5	4.0
Maintaining Student Records	7	6.2	7	5.9
Number of Responses = 40				

In 1979 the counselors were also asked to rank their actual and ideal activities (Table 2). Comparison of these ranks (column A) with the 1976 rankings shows that, as the programs evolved, individual counseling replaced consultation as the most time-consuming activity and parent conferences replaced pupil assessment as the fifth most time-consuming activity. There were also several changes in the ideal ranks from 1976 to 1979; as the programs matured the counselors felt group guidance should replace consultation as the second priority and parent conferences should replace coordination as the activity with the fourth priority. There were no drastic changes, however, indicating that the counselors' roles and their perceptions of their roles were refined rather than radically revised over the three-year period.

In addition to ranking their activities in 1979, the counselors were also asked to estimate the percentage of time they actually spent on the seven counseling activities and their ideal distribution of time. These percentages were then ranked. The activity that consumed the most time received a rank of one and the activity that consumed the least time received a rank of seven. Thus, group guidance was estimated to take most of the elementary counselors' time and maintaining student records was estimated to consume the least time. These figures show some differences from those in column A, since the figures in column A had a range of one to seven while in column B

the range was 1 to 100 percent. Clearly though, maintaining student records consumed the least time and was perceived to ideally be the least important of the seven activities; and there was considerable agreement between what the counselors were actually doing and what they felt they should be doing.

Table 2

Counselors' Ranking of Actual Time Spent on Various Counseling Activities, Proposed Ideal Rank and Estimated Distribution of Time in 1979

	Actual				Ideal or Proposed			
	A. Rank		B. Estimated % of Time		A. Rank		B. Estimated % of Time	
	Rank of Average	Average of Counselors' Response	Rank of Average	Average of Counselors' Response	Rank of Average	Average of Counselors' Response	Rank of Average	Average of Counselors' Response
Individual Counseling	1	2.7	2	18.9	1	2.0	2	23.7
Consultation	2	2.9	2	18.9	3	3.1	3	16.3
Group Guidance	3	3.1	1	21.4	2	2.2	1	25.5
Coordination	4	3.9	4	13.2	5	4.3	4	12.1
Parent Conferences	5	4.0	6	11.1	4	3.8	5	11.5
Pupil Assessment	6	4.7	5	11.2	6	5.4	6	7.6
Maintaining Records of Students	7	6.5	7	5.3	7	6.7	7	3.4
Total Time				100.0%				100.0%
Number of Responses	(29)		(26)		(26)		(22)	

Program Change

When the programs were initiated in 1976 some of the districts anticipated a counselor position and conducted elaborate needs analyses, while in other districts there had been no planning. In all cases, however, the districts were permitted to modify the program as the year progressed. Thus, 24 of the 29 respondents reported that their elementary guidance program had changed since its inception in 1976. The major changes were expansion of the program (nine districts), expansion of the staff (eight districts) and a change in program emphasis (six districts). Only two counselors indicated their programs had not changed since its inception.[1] In addition to the program changes, 25 counselors reported that their role in the program had changed. The major changes noted were working more closely with parents (seven responses) and working more closely with teachers (six responses). As a whole then, the programs were viewed as moving in positive directions and providing more services.

[1] See Appendix B for a complete listing of the responses and frequencies of responses given by the elementary guidance counselors in 1979.

Funding

After the initial year of funding, 23 of the 29 districts assumed the entire funding of the elementary guidance program. Four districts were using district and Title IV funds to finance the programs, one was using all Title IV funds, and one was using district and Title I funds.

Evaluation of the Programs

In 1976 outside evaluation teams visited the projects, evaluated the major strengths and weaknesses of the programs and made recommendations to the school districts to improve the programs.[2] The major strengths of the programs were:

Responses	
22	Qualities of the person selected as the elementary counselor.
16	Communication with administrators and board members.
15	Support of teachers and quality of teacher in-service programs.
10	Communication with parents and the community.

The counselors themselves appeared to be more modest than the outside evaluation teams and in 1979 identified the support of others as the major strength of their elementary guidance programs. Favorable reception of the programs by all of the groups concerned was shown by the following listing of major strengths:

Responses	
14	Support and involvement of the staff.
10	Support, enthusiasm and involvement of parents.
9	Student support and enthusiasm.
9	Support of the administration.

The outside evaluation teams identified the following major weaknesses of the new programs in 1976:

Responses	
14	Objectives were too ambitious for the time and people allotted.
10	Teacher in-service programs were not well developed.
10	Communications with the school and community were poor.

[2] See Appendix C for the strengths, weaknesses and recommendations of the outside evaluation teams in 1976.

While communication was seen as the major weakness of the new guidance programs in 1976, the counselors appeared to feel that these problems had been largely resolved by 1979. The program, though, was still seen as too ambitious for the number of people involved; 14 counselors indicated understaffing was the major weakness of their programs. Several counselors reported caseloads of over 1,000 students and one person reported a caseload of 2,000 students. The second major weakness in 1979, "spread too thin" (seven responses), indicated the same basic problem as understaffing, while inadequate physical facilities was seen as the third major weakness (five responses).

Recommendations for Improvement of the Programs

In 1976 the outside evaluation teams identified better communication as a major recommendation to the school districts to improve their new elementary guidance programs. Their top three recommendations were:

Responses	
20	Establish a regularly scheduled informational program for teachers and parents.
15	Organize a steering committee which would include teachers and parents to help the elementary counselor.
13	Obtain more funds and expand efforts.

In contrast, the counselors' recommendations for the improvement of their programs in 1979 reflected the major weaknesses they had identified and were:

Responses	
18	Hire additional staff.
8	Provide more teacher in-service.
4	Provide more developmental guidance.

The counselors' top priority recommendations for other school districts which initiate new elementary guidance programs appear to reflect some of the major problems they dealt with when developing their own programs. They were:

Responses	
9	Orient parents, teachers and students.
8	Gain administrative support.
6	Prepare a job description for the elementary counselor.

The counselors were also asked how the guidance services function of PDE could help them improve their programs. Their principal recommendations were: disseminate information, research findings and ideas (nine responses); provide workships to improve counselor skills and to exchange ideas (seven responses); help mandate elementary guidance programs (four responses); and inform counselors of the services you can provide (four responses).

Staff Size and Tenure in Position

The counselors reported an average of 1.23 elementary counselors in their districts. One district had three elementary counselors, while 23 districts (79 percent) had only one elementary counselor, the respondent. The average counselor had been in the position 3.25 years and 17 had been in the position since the program began in 1976. One counselor, however, had been with the district only two months, while another reported eight years in the position, having been a part-time counselor prior to the funding.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The funding of the 40 new elementary guidance programs with ESEA Title III funds has had a significant long-range impact: 32 of the programs (80 percent) were still in operation three years after the initial year of funding. Additionally, many of the programs had expanded their staff and/or services, and three of the districts which discontinued their progams due to lack of funds had included elementary guidance in their long-range plans. Seventy-nine percent of the counselors responding to the mail questionnaire reported their programs were financed by district funds, 14 percent were financing the program with district and Title IV funds, one district was using all Title IV funds and one was using a combination of district and Title I funds. The counselors were very enthusiastic about the program and, as a whole, reported strong support from the administration, teachers, community and students. They also appeared to feel that the problems associated with new programs had largely been resolved and that the major current weakness of the programs was that they were understaffed. Thus, their primary recommendation for improvement of the programs was to expand the staff.

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN ESEA TITLE III
GUIDANCE PROJECTS 1975-1976

Districts Included in the Analysis of the Mail Questionnaire

Bermudian Springs School District
Berwick Area School District
Blacklick Valley School District
Brentwood Borough School District
Brockway Area School District
Carlisle Area School District
Columbia Borough School District
Crestwood School District
Daniel Boone Area School District
Dover Area School District
Forest Hills School District
Indiana Area School District
Jersey Shore Area School District
Juniata Valley School District
Mercer Area School District
Mid Valley School District
Moniteau School District
North Pocono School District
Northwestern School District
Northwestern Lehigh School District
Palmerton Area School District
Reynolds School District
Richland School District
Rochester Area School District
Stroudsburg Area School District
Susquehanna Community School District
Turtle Creek Area School District
Upper Perkiomen School District
Warrior Run School District

Districts Responding to the Mail Questionnaire Too Late to be Included in the Analysis

Greater Nanticoke Area School District
Williams Valley School District

Districts Which Did Not Respond to the Mail Questionnaire

Wattsburg Area School District

Districts in Which The Programs Were Discontinued

Burgettstown Area School District
Central Cambria School District
East Allegheny School District
Garnet Valley School District
Grove City Area School District
Mount Union Area School District
North Star School District
Ringgold School District

APPENDIX B

COUNSELORS' RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS ABOUT
THEIR ELEMENTARY GUIDANCE PROGRAMS IN 1979

III. Program

1. Please specify how your guidance program has changed since its inception in 1976 (number of staff, responsibilities, scope of the program, administrative support, etc.).

Responses

9	Expanded program (expanded to include more schools, group guidance provided to all, more parent involvement, integrated with other programs, expanded to K-6, added career awareness, added parenting courses, added guidance classes for every student every two weeks).
8	Expanded staff (five added a full-time counselor, two added one part-time, one increased clerical staff).
6	Changed program (pupil assessment taken over by psychologist, developmental guidance preempted by crisis-oriented work, more guidance-oriented, parent discussion groups discontinued, more group guidance evolving from crisis-oriented to developmental).
5	Have more responsibilities (more special evaluation responsibilities, gifted program added, more administrative responsibilities, local education agency representative, parent groups, assessment, long-range planning).
5	Have more administrative support.
3	Reduced staff (one lost part-time counselor, one lost clerical help, one lost aide).
2	Have fewer responsibilities (reduction in student-counselor ratio).
1	Included long-range plan for elementary guidance with the district long-range plan.

2. Please specify how your role has changed since 1976.

Responses

7	Do more work with parents.
6	Work more closely with teachers.
5	Establish better coordination with other programs.
3	Do more consulting.
3	Do more individual and group work.
3	Have same basic role but with more responsibilities.
2	Do fewer administrative duties and do more counseling.
2	Do more group work and less individual work.
2	Have more self-referrals.
2	Do more work with special groups.
1	Do less developmental guidance and more crisis-oriented therapeutic work.
1	Change to K-4 only.
1	Do less paper work.
1	Do more teaching, less guidance.
1	Add middle school guidance.
1	Do administration/coordination.

IV. How is your program being funded?

Responses

23	Local funds.
4	Local and Title IV funds.
1	Title IV funds.
1	Local and Title I funds.

V. Evaluation

1. What are the major strengths of your program?

Responses

14	Support and involvement of staff.
10	Support, enthusiasm and involvement of parents.
9	Support and enthusiasm of students.
9	Support of administration.
7	Qualities of the counselor.
5	Student contact.
4	The materials.
4	Developmental guidance.
3	Group guidance sessions.
3	A good referral system.
3	The student-counselor ratio.
3	Communication and coordination.
2	Our newsletter.
2	Support of outside groups.
2	Focus on children.
1	Emphasis on exceptional children.
1	Development of a child-study team.
1	Machine scoring of tests with a profile sent home.
1	Teacher-counselor ratio.
1	Meeting individual and group needs.
1	Flexibility in grouping and scheduling.
1	Use of the preventive approach.
1	Organization.
1	Individual counseling.
1	Parent effectiveness training.

2. What are the weaknesses of your guidance program?

Responses

14	Understaffed, caseload too big.
7	Spread too thin.
5	Poor physical facilities.
4	Little emphasis on career awareness.
4	Not enough community involvement.
4	Have to do our own clerical work.
3	Insufficient teacher in-service.
2	Travel among 4 or 5 schools.

Responses

1	Insufficient evaluation.
1	Not enough peer counseling.
1	Lack of resource center.
1	Underuse of community agencies.
1	Insufficient planning time.
1	Too much time spent on pupil assessment.
1	Inadequate use of group-test results.
1	Limited contact with other elementary guidance counselors.
1	Little teacher involvement with classroom guidance.
1	No parenting program.
1	Not enough time for group guidance.
1	Not enough time for individual guidance.

VI. Recommendations

1. What are your recommendations for the improvement of your program?

Responses

18	Provide additional staff.
8	Develop more teacher in-service.
4	Provide more developmental guidance.
3	Encourage more teacher involvement.
3	Encourage better public relations.
3	Encourage more parental involvement.
3	Provide more career awareness.
2	Provide more individual counseling.
2	Provide adequate clerical help.
2	Provide a parenting program.
1	Develop more local in-service programs for counselors.
1	Provide opportunities for elementary counselors to mix.
1	Make use of resource centers and outside speakers.
1	Develop a kindergarten screening program.
1	Refine counseling skills.
1	Increase budget.
1	Provide better facilities.
1	Allow time in the summer for follow-up work.
1	Decrease time and involvement with the intermediate unit.

2. What are your top priority recommendations for other schools which initiate new elementary guidance programs?

Responses

9	Orient parents, teachers and students.
8	Gain administrative support.
6	Prepare a job description for the elementary guidance counselor.
5	Develop a plan for teacher involvement.
5	Do a needs assessment first.
4	Develop a realistic plan.
4	Develop a good public relations plan.
3	Keep a realistic student-counselor ratio.
2	Gain support of parents.

Responses

2	Have one counselor to a building.
2	Get a good counselor with successful teaching experience.
2	Place emphasis on working with the students.
1	Outline the referral procedure for teachers.
1	Provide adequate facilities and clerical help.
1	Plan for group guidance.
1	Require monthly reports and evaluations.
1	Provide developmental guidance for all students.
1	Offer parenting courses.
1	Use a system approach with realistic goals which can be evaluated.
1	Emphasize preventing problems.

3. In what ways do you feel the Guidance Services Section of PDE could help you improve your guidance program?

Responses

9	Disseminate information on outstanding programs, research findings and ideas.
7	Provide workshops to improve counselor skills and for idea exchange similar to the Title III meetings in 1976.
4	Help mandate elementary guidance programs.
4	Inform counselors of the services you can provide.
2	Evaluate guidance materials.
2	Update the elementary guidance materials handbook and distribute it.
1	Provide funds for counselor training.
1	Provide funds for parent training or groups.
1	Provide funds for counselors to visit other districts.
1	Do a needs assessment.
1	Support district Title proposal for another counselor.
1	Strengthen intermediate unit pupil personnel section.
1	Provide information about Dr. Keats' multi-modal approach.
1	Establish guidelines for elementary guidance programs.
1	Write a curriculum for small groups of students and parents.
1	Set up a counselor exchange.
1	Evaluate the programs every three years.

APPENDIX C

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF OUTSIDE EVALUATION TEAMS IN 1976

Responses	Strengths
22	Qualities of person selected as elementary counselor.
16	Communication with administrators and board members.
15	Support of teachers and quality of teacher in-service programs.
10	Communication with parents and the community.
9	Student awareness and enthusiasm about the program.
8	Cooperative efforts in dealing with students.
7	Observable improvement in student behavior and achievement.
6	Attempt to provide a needed service.
4	Facilities and materials.
4	Organization.
3	Career guidance component.
2	Freedom for experimentation.
2	Individual counseling.
2	Testing data.

	Weaknesses
14	Objectives too ambitious for the time and people allotted.
10	Teacher in-service programs not well developed.
10	Communication within the school and with the community was poor.
7	Objectives not clearly stated in measurable terms.
6	Late implementation.
4	Facilities inadequate.
4	Parent participation inadequate.
3	Group counseling efforts weak.
3	Lack of follow-up after individual counseling.
3	Staff too dependent on counselor.
3	No curricular review or attempt to integrate program with curriculum.
2	Some teachers/classes wished to be excluded from the program.
2	Parochial school not actively involved.
2	Poor career component.
2	Materials not well developed.
1	Insufficient individual counseling opportunities.
1	Peer group counseling on lower grade level not well integrated.
1	Consultant not well used.

	Recommendations for the School District
20	Establish a regular informational program for teachers and parents.
15	Organize a steering committee which would include teachers and parents to help elementary counselor.
13	Obtain more funding and expand efforts.
12	Include more public relations and interaction with community.
9	Have continuing evaluation and determine attitudes toward program.
8	Establish long-range objectives in measurable terms.

Responses	Recommendations for the School District (cont'd)
8	Collect better data and make records more accessible and useful.
7	Improve and continue follow-up.
6	Provide adequate facilities within the school.
4	Develop a sequential activity integrated with the curriculum.
3	Restrict services to either certain grades or buildings to a manageable quota.
3	Increase career education.
2	Continue to strengthen coordinated efforts.
2	Focus on preventive aspect.
2	Expand parochial contacts.
2	Spend less time on coordination and more with students.
2	Don't put elementary counselor in test-administrator role.
1	Have more group counseling activities.